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ABSTRACT

Currently, every aspect of Japanese education is undergoing reform. The personnel management system is being structured largely from the viewpoint of two policy interests: introduction of a new teacher evaluation system and dealing with teachers' lack of teaching skills and competencies. This paper examines these two policy interests, noting implications for teacher education. It focuses on the new teacher performance evaluation in Tokyo, which is intended to improve the competence of educational personnel and energize school organizations through appropriate evaluation of teacher competence and performance. This new evaluation system consists of a self-report evaluation and a performance evaluation by principals and head teachers. School-based training has been introduced into the schools to improve teachers recognized as lacking good teaching skills. The issue of teacher evaluation has evolved into a discussion of renewing licenses at the national level. (Contains 12 references.) (SM)

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Restructuring Teacher Evaluation in Japan: Recent Developments in Personnel Management System

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Current educational reform is undergoing in every aspect of Japanese education. Some may describe it as "the third educational reform" since the Meiji Restoration, or the re-examination of the educational reform after the Second World War. Under these circumstances, the personnel management system is being structured largely from two policy interests: the introduction of a new teacher evaluation system and how to deal with "teachers lacking with teaching ability". The purpose of this paper is twofold: to inquire into how these two policy interests are discussed and developed into measures in the emerging personnel management system, and to consider its implication to teacher education.

Two Aspects of Restructuring Evaluation

Year 2000 was epoch-making in restructuring the personnel management system in Japan. The restructuring consists of two aspects. The first one is the introduction of a new teacher performance evaluation system. In April, 2000, Tokyo Metropolitan Government introduced a new teacher performance evaluation system, instead of the old dead system. Its impact on the other local boards of education needs to be monitored closely.

Another aspect of restructuring personnel management is building a system to effectively deal with teachers lacking teaching ability. *Monbusho* enacted "The Outline of Implementation of Studies Concerning the System of Dealing with Teachers Lacking Teaching Ability" in May 2000, which requested 14 prefectural and 2 cabinet-order designated city boards of education

to investigate the practical method to improve the management system of educational personnel. Both of these two reform initiatives share the aim to enhance the teacher quality based on the evaluation of teacher performance. Although the different bodies took initiative in these two reform measures, it should be noted that these two initiatives are inseparably related.

A supporting evidence is observed in the final report by National Commission on Educational Reform (NCER, 2000). It discussed educational reform measures and actions in three sub-areas, and made 17 proposals to change education. In the section titled "Create new schools for the new age", the commission proposed to "create a system in which teachers' eagerness and efforts are rewarded and evaluated", and advocated the practical measures.

Create a system in which teachers' eagerness and efforts are rewarded and evaluated

The most important people in school education are the individual teachers. The evaluation of each teacher should reflect on his or her actions so as to recognize the eagerness and efforts of individual teachers, develop their merits and enhance their effectiveness.

Proposal

- 1. Teachers who have exerted much effort and shown remarkable results should be rewarded through "special allowances" and other financial means, treatment as semi-management and other personnel measures, commendations and other measures.*
- 2. Not all teachers should have direct relationships with children/students until they retire and continue teaching. They should be allowed to assume a different role within school according to the aptitude of each teacher and to select a different type of work to school education, if necessary.*
- 3. Training opportunities for acquiring expertise and opportunities for taking long-term work experience training at companies should be enhanced.*
- 4. As for the teachers who are repeatedly evaluated as being unable to conduct effective teaching and class management and who are judged not to have made any improvement, action should be taken to make it possible to order such teachers to move to a different type of job and eventually to dismiss them or to take other measures.*

5. *Types of employment should be diversified, including the use of part-time teachers, fixed-term teachers, and teachers employed from members of society. Concerning the method of employing teachers, entrance should be diversified and more focus will be placed on the working conditions after employment. The introduction of a system for renewing a teacher's license should be considered.*

<<http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/education/report/report.html>>

In order to translate the recommendations by NCER into concrete forms, *Monbukai* worked out the Educational Reform Plan for the 21st Century (Rainbow Plan), which presented "the overall picture of the future efforts needed for education reform", consisting of major policies, actions and schedule. Chart 1 shows the major policies and schedule concerning the restructuring of teacher evaluation. One can see that almost all the recommendations by the National Commission were adopted in the plan. In the following section, the new teacher performance evaluation in Tokyo, who is the pioneer in teacher evaluation, will be reviewed.

New Teacher Evaluation: Teacher Performance Evaluation in Tokyo

Evaluating teachers is not new. It was introduced and implemented nationwide in Japan since the late 1950's. However the government made the decision to do so under politically very tense circumstances, both domestic and international, that it caused a serious confrontation between the conservatives and the progressives. Although the teacher evaluation system has been in practice for forty years since then, it has become the mere shell, and has failed to achieve its purpose. One of the reasons is that the teacher union intensified the campaign against the teacher evaluation system as well as student achievement testing in the early sixties, which was partly successful. Another is cultural: evaluating and rewarding outstanding performance were not compatible with seniority system, which had been a long-time tradition in Japan.

In the late 1990's, the political and economical environment surrounding education was quite different from the early 1960's. Slack economy and global competition required the government to accelerate the reform in every aspect of the society. Deregulation, competition, choice, accountability are some of the buzzwords in Japanese education of 90's(see Ono, 2001;Collinson and Ono, 2001). As new conservatives have won more support, the teacher

union is no longer as militant or influential as before. It was under these circumstances that the introduction of a new evaluation system was discussed in Tokyo in 1998.

Outline of Teacher Evaluation in Tokyo

The new evaluation system aims to improve the competence of educational personnel and energize school organizations through appropriate evaluation of competence and performance of teachers (Tokyo Metropolitan Office of Education, 2000). According to the office, the new system in place of the old has been developed after the reflection on the old system. They say that the old system suffered some problems involved in the system itself and in the implementation. For example, teacher evaluation was based on the observation results as the only source of information. Because principals were the sole evaluators in the old system, some questioned the objectivity and fairness of the evaluation results. As mentioned earlier, strong objection against the system by the teacher union hampered the use of evaluation results in consideration of relocation or compensation. In consequence, "personnel management system tended to be based more on standardized seniority system, which does not necessarily contribute to uplifting of teachers' morale." (Tokyo Metropolitan Office of Education, 200, p4)

On the other hand, "the evaluation system introduced by Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education has the certain characteristics which are not found in the old system. Firstly it is bilateral evaluation system utilizing self-report system by teachers, secondly the evaluation items and how the evaluators should be have more chances of objective and fair evaluation, and thirdly the system intends to make use of the evaluation results for faculty development of the teachers." (Tokyo Metropolitan Office of Education, 2000, pp4-5).

The new evaluation system consists of two separate components: self-report/self evaluation and performance evaluation by principals and head teachers. Self-report is introduced with the intention to motivate individual teachers to actively commit themselves to their responsibilities by setting their own goals. It is also hoped that teachers profit by self-evaluation to recognize their own abilities and areas to improve, and initiate own faculty development and enhancement of performance level. In setting own performance goals of a year, principals and head teachers will have conferences with teachers in order to give guidance and counsel about directions and standards and achievement level of self reported goals.

The second component of teacher evaluation is performance evaluation. It aims at scanning teacher performance levels and finding the measures and actions to help them grow and develop the quality and competence. Results of the performance evaluation will be reflected appropriately in teacher salary and promotion to improve morale among teachers as well as to invigorate school organizations.

Performance evaluation is carried out by absolute and relative evaluations. Absolute evaluation of performance is for faculty development purpose, conducted by head teachers and then principals, while relative evaluation is for merit rating for increase in salary and promotion done by the board of education. The principals must submit the data applying distribution ratio of each evaluation grade (3 levels across the school types and school levels) to the secondary evaluation results (absolute evaluation) conducted by them. (Tokyo Metropolitan Agency of Education, 2000) It is this aspect of merit pay based on performance evaluation that has caused the heated argument among the concerned (Katsuno, 2000; Kodma, 2000). If the future of the system depends on its objectivity and fairness to the teachers who are evaluated, the biggest challenge lies in the training of principals and head teachers who work as evaluators. For the system to be useful, helpful and meaningful to the teachers, it must address the issue of disclosure of the results to the teachers. The related regulations do not make specific mention to disclosure (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2000) in spite of the positive remark by the personnel director to support its necessity. (cited in the petition against the introduction of the system, 2000)

Create a System to Deal with Teachers Lacking with Teaching Ability

The problem of teachers lacking with teaching ability was first brought up in the second report by Ad Hoc Council on Education (*Rinkyoshin*), an advisory panel to the then prime minister Nakasone, in April 1986. It pointed out that the problem of the teachers lacking with aptitude and competence (*tekikakusei wo kaku kyoin*) must not be neglected so that appropriate measures such as sanctions (*bungenshobun*) should be taken. With this as a turning point, the issue to ensure aptitude and competence of teachers attracted more attention from a view of exclusion of disqualified teachers.

In the 90's, when schools are experiencing the problems such as bullying, school-phobia, school violence, classroom disruption and chaos, there is a growing concern over the existence of the teachers who are not capable of dealing effectively with those serious and

complex problem situations. At the same time, recent emphasis on deregulation and decentralization in education has turned the ensuring the independence and autonomy of schools as one of the reform issues.

In this context, Central Council on Education (*Chukyoshin*) made the recommendations concerning the teachers lacking with aptitude and competence in its report titled "Future of Local Educational Administration" (*Kongo no chiho kyoiku gyosei no arikata ni tsuite, 1998*). It reads:

As for teachers lacking with aptitude and competence, local boards of education should seek to be better prepared to continuously observe, guide and provide training, and to administer properly the means of sanctions prescribed in Local Public Service Law Article 28 if necessary.

(Original in Japanese) <www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/index.htm>

In 1999, the third report by Teacher Education Council (*Kyoyoshin*) went a step further by recommending to consider job-transfer of those teachers on the basis of the wishes.

As for the teachers who have been recognized as being lack with aptitude and competence, local boards of education are expected to be better prepared to continuously conduct observations and give guidance, and give training properly, to consider job-transfer to suitable types of job if available, on the basis of their wishes, and to seek to administer properly the means of sanctions if necessary.

(Original in Japanese) <www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/index.htm>

It should be noted that this report recommended proper training and job transfer prior to "sanctions", which are imposed on the teachers against their will because of their poor performance of duties. In other words, developmental measures are first recommended for the teachers judged as being lack with aptitude and competence before some exclusive measures are taken.

As of August 2001, two measures concerning incompetent teachers have moved forward. First, Revision of Law Concerning Organization and Management of Local Education Administration passed Diet in June. This enables local boards of education "to establish measures to relocate those teachers evaluated as lacking with teaching ability and not well-qualified to non-teaching positions smoothly". It is the responsibility of the prefectural boards of education to prescribe the formalities to verify the cases filed and make decisions. At national level, the government made an appropriation of 100 million in FY 2001 to promote developing

personnel management system that deals with incompetent teachers. Now the restructured personnel management system is ready for implementation.

Tokyo introduced the school-based training targeted at the teachers recognized as lacking with teaching ability since 1997, followed by three prefectures such as Fukuoka, Saga and Miyagi. It is reported that several other prefectures are considering the implementation of such. Besides, Tokyo initiated a retraining program in April 2001, specially designed for such teachers in addition to the school-based training (Chimura, 2001). The program called "Teaching Ability Step Up Training" (*shidoryoku step-up training*) is offered at Professional Development Center for School Personnel (*kyoshokuin kenshu senta*), newly opened with a mission to streamline the professional development programs and to improve qualities and competence required by teachers.

Definition and recognition of teachers lacking with teaching ability accompanies a lot of difficulties, but the decisions of such teachers that need such retraining at the center will be made on the basis of the newly introduced teacher evaluation data. According to the regulations, a teacher lacking with teaching ability is defined as "a teacher who is unable to conduct teaching effectively due to the reasons other than illness and injury and who is judged to need some personnel administrative actions." (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2001) The decision of the action for such a teacher is valid for one year and may be extended up to three years depending on the evaluation of effectiveness of retraining. And when local authorities have made a judgement that the teacher in question lacks with teaching ability and he/she has not made any improvement in spite of having had necessary measures such as training, they may legally order the teacher to move to job other than teaching.

Concluding remarks

Monbu-kagakusho commissioned Central Council on Education this April to investigate four issues designated in the Educational Reform Plan for the 21st Century. One of the issues is the teacher licensure system. The ministry explains the reason to commission the task as follows.

In the final report by the National Commission on Educational Reform, it is proposed to consider the introduction of a system for renewing a teacher's license with the objective of creating a system in which teachers' enthusiasm and efforts are rewarded. From the viewpoint to maintain the aptitude and qualities required by teachers or to improve own expertise, it is necessary to discuss the pros and cons of

implementation of a system for license renewal and to consider the possibility of introducing a system.

(Original in Japanese) <www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/houdou/13/06/0696.htm>

Teacher evaluation has developed into the discussion of renewing license at national level. Central Council is discussing the matter in the subcommittee for teacher education of elementary and secondary education section within the council. It is expected to make recommendation by the end of 2001.

Restructuring of personnel management system is in progress in the aspects of teacher evaluation and how to deal with the incompetent teachers. These two aspects are tightly related in practices of personnel management as we saw. In creating more effective systems, it is essential to stand on the idea to develop a system toward improvement of teacher qualities and competence. For that purpose, measures such as self-report and performance evaluation are important components in the system, and disclosure of the evaluation results must be so. Reeducation/retraining and transfer to different type of job constitute the essential aspects in the latter. Individual initiatives among teachers, subjectivity and transparency of evaluation, and more emphasis on continuous professional development will be the keys in successfully restructuring the personnel management system. One must be discreet and careful in developing criteria and formalities to make decisions to exclude the teachers lacking with teaching ability. However, the negative influence on our children caused by incompetent teachers may be bigger than we imagine.

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Chart 1 Create a system in which teachers' eagerness and efforts are rewarded and evaluated

Policies	Measures and Actions	Schedule
Introduce an awards system, a bonus, and a special promotion system for outstanding teachers	Recommendation of outstanding teachers and implementation of the accompanying special pay raise and other measures	Implement within FY 2002
Take appropriate measures on incompetent teachers such as teaching suspensions or dismissal from teaching profession	Revision of "Law concerning Organization and Management of Local Educational Administration" e.g. establishing measures to relocate teachers identified as the teachers lacking with teaching ability and not well-qualified to non-teaching positions	The revised Law passed through regular Diet session and enacted
Establish a system where teachers have working community experience	Promotion of developing the system of personnel management to deal with teachers lacking with teaching ability 100 million Yen appropriation	The FY 2001 budget bill passed through the Diet
Diversify types and methods of teacher employment	Expansion of training opportunities for taking long-term work experience training at companies 200 million yen Financial assistance to training opportunities at companies	The FY2001 budget bill passed through the Diet Promote commitments by local boards of education
	Diversification of methods of employment	Promote commitments by local boards of education
	Revision of "Law concerning the Standards for Class Size and Teacher and Staff Allocation in Public Schools" Employment of part-time teachers and fixed term teachers making use of the standards for teacher allocation	The revised Law passed through regular Diet session and enacted
Consider the introduction of teacher's license renewal	Expansion of the project hiring members of society 200 million yen financial assistance to the project hiring and allocating members of society in public schools	Passing the FY 2001 budget bill through the Diet
Improve teachers' quality and competence	Consideration of the possibility of introducing teachers' license renewal	Central Council on Education will discuss within the framework of teacher license system, and make recommendations within 2001
	Streamlining implementation of national professional development programs	Implement at National Teacher Professional Development Center to be established in 2001
	Encouragement and support of voluntary professional development activities by teachers' initiatives	Implement a program of long term approved leave to pursue advanced degree in graduate schools

<Original in Japanese, translated by Y. Ono: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shougai/21plan/ps.htm>



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